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UNCLAS HONG KONG 001317

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FOR CA/OCS/EAP, DEPT FOR M/PRI, DEPT FOR SES-O, HHS FOR
OGHA, CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH

E.O. 12958: N/A
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MC, PINR, PREL, TBIO, HK, CH
SUBJECT: HONG KONG H1N1 UPDATE - FIRST POSSIBLE
H1N1-RELATED DEATH

REF: A. A) HONG KONG 1109
[1](#)B. B) HONG KONG 1164

[1](#)1. Summary: Hong Kong and Macau both continue to see increases in confirmed H1N1 cases. In Hong Kong, the total number of confirmed H1N1 cases surpassed 1,500 on July 16, while Macau is approaching 100 total cases. The number of H1N1 patients admitted to hospitals in Hong Kong continues to slowly rise. Reports surfaced July 16 of the first possible H1N1-related death in Hong Kong. Tests are underway to determine if H1N1 was a primary or contributing factor in the July 10 death of a 42-year-old sailor who died in hospital. The Hong Kong Government (HKG) has no plans to modify their procedures to combat H1N1 at this time. End Summary.

Reported Infections Continue Climbing

[1](#)2. Hong Kong exceeded 1,500 confirmed H1N1 infections July 16 when the HKG announced 85 new cases, for a total of 1,552. There have been, on average, 50 new cases identified per day during the last three weeks. Despite the increasing infection rate, HKG health officials consider the response measures currently in place (Ref A) adequate as they continue to focus on mitigation of the effects of the virus and provide care for individuals with serious complications.

[1](#)3. Macau health officials report 94 confirmed cases since the first positive case was identified June 18 (Ref B). Less than one week later Macau identified the first community transmission case, and currently one-third of the cases in Macau have been contracted through community transmission. Macau continues to combat the spread of the virus through isolation of H1N1-positive individuals and home quarantine for close contacts.

HK Hospitalizations Increase, Officials ID First Possible Death

[1](#)4. The number of patients admitted to hospital for treatment in Hong Kong continues to slowly climb. On July 16, the HKG reported 23 H1N1 patients in public hospitals for treatment. Of these, three patients are categorized "serious" and two patients "critical." The most vulnerable individuals in Hong Kong appear to be the same as reported in other locations) individuals with pre-existing medical conditions, especially respiratory problems. At least one of the seriously ill patients, however, does not fit this profile) a 23-year-old college student with no pre-existing medical conditions.

[1](#)5. On July 16, Centre for Health Protection (CHP) Controller

Dr. Thomas Tsang announced that Hong Kong may have had its first H1N1-related fatality. A 42-year-old Filipino sailor who died at Ruttonjee Hospital July 10 of community-associated methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (CA-MRSA) later tested positive for H1N1. The man reportedly fell ill while aboard ship and was unable to receive treatment for several days until his vessel returned to Hong Kong. Tsang stated that H1N1 could have been a factor in the man's death, and added that he likely contracted the virus outside of Hong Kong. CHP officials confirm that an autopsy has been ordered, and that it will take several days to determine whether H1N1 was the primary cause or a contributing factor in the man's death.

16. The HKG does not intend to modify the procedures in place to combat H1N1, despite the increase in hospitalizations and the possible H1N1-related death. Hong Kong's serious illness rate is consistent with the rates reported worldwide and the death rate) 0.06% if the reported H1N1-related death is confirmed) is lower than the world average. One issue that would provoke a review and possible change in response measures is a mutation of the virus, making it much more lethal or drug resistant. CHP officials continue to closely monitor developments here and around the world for signs of such a change.
DONOVAN